

TV-2 Interview—POW!

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

John Watson, the Editor-in-Chief of Wayne State's revolutionary student newspaper, the *South End*, has been charged with assault and battery on a TV newsman.

Watson, pleading innocent, was arraigned Feb. 14 in Judge Robert Colombo's court. A jury trial was set for March 6th. Ken Cockrel is his attorney.

Joe Weaver, a WJBK-TV 2 newsman, accused Watson of pushing him down and hitting him when Weaver sought to interview Watson last Monday.

In a statement to the Fifth Estate Weaver said, "When Watson ordered me to leave I was grabbed from behind when I was leaving to ask Stan Putnam (Advisor to the South End) if Watson had the authority to make me leave. I was then held by Watson while two others hit me."

Evelyn Kirsch, a former secretary to Watson, was bitten on the finger by a cameraman. Weaver stated, "The girl had her hands over his camera and both of his hands were in use so he used what he had left." Miss Kirsch had herself vaccinated against rabies by getting a tetanus shot.

When asked if he intended to go back again, Weaver replied. "With a larger crew next time."

The University administration is contemplating charging Weaver with trespassing as an outgrowth of his refusal to obey a lawful order from Watson.

A number of witnesses present at the time of the incident say that Weaver, when ordered a number of times by Watson to leave, refused repeatedly and at one point commented, "Make me leave. You people hold protest sit-ins, I think I will."

In the struggle that ensued Weaver suffered some minor cuts and bruises. Also as a result of the scuffle, the TV camera and sound equipment were damaged. Weaver told this paper that the equipment was only "slightly damaged."

An interesting development that could occur in this case is that Judge Colombo has already set a precedent for this particular type of action.

When James Griffin, an usher at an anti-war teach-in held at Community Arts Auditorium on November 7, 1966, removed two members of Breakthrough because they attacked another usher, Griffin was arrested by the campus security police. While his hands were handcuffed behind his back and he was being led out with police holding both of his arms, one of the released Breakthrough members attacked him.

Although the Breakthrough member was charged with assault and battery his case was thrown out of court by Colombo. Colombo had just sentenced Griffin to two years probation and \$400.00 in fines for "disturbing the peace." Therefore he concluded that, "since Griffin had originally broken the law, he was responsible for all further acts (?!?)."

Colombo was formerly counsel for the racist and right-wing Detroit Police Officers' Association.

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